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THE PARIS COMMUNE IN LONDON AND THE SPATIAL HISTORY OF IDEAS, 1871-1900*

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Following the Paris Commune of 1871, around 3500 Communard refugees and their families arrived in Britain, with the majority settling in the capital. This article is an exploration of these exiled Communards within the geography of London. The spatial configurations of London's radical and exile communities, and the ways in which Communards interacted with those they crossed paths with is vital in understanding how some of the ideas that came out of the Commune permeated London's radical scene. Too often British political movements, particularly British socialisms, have been presented as being wilfully impervious to developments on the continent. Instead, this article argues that in order to find these often more affective and ancillary foreign influences, it is important to think spatially and trace how the exile map of London corresponded with, extended, and redrew parts of the existing radical mapping of the city. In carving out spaces for intellectual exchange, Communard refugees moved within and across various communities and physical places in the city. The social and spatial context in which British sympathizers absorbed and appropriated ideas from the Commune is key to understanding how the exiles of the Paris Commune left their mark on the landscape, and mindscape, of London.

The main artery of the political refugees' quarter in London runs in a straight line from Fitzroy Street, Fitzroy Square, to the base of Ryder's Court, Leicester Square. But there are places of interest in the lateral streets ... many of the occupants have wonderful stories to relate concerning the adventures and dangers from which they have escaped by establishing themselves in London ... It must suffice for the present purpose merely

to indicate, in very broad lines, what is the principal refugees' quarters in London ... the explorer can find out for himself much more than has been stated here.¹

In his essay on refugees in London, most specifically on the exiles from the Paris Commune, the Communard Adolphe Smith invited his reader to be an 'explorer' - to walk the streets of London in order to discover its history. While the twenty-first century London explorer might struggle to find traces of the political refugees of the Paris Commune of 1871, the explorer of the nineteenth century can give us a much richer picture. By using as a guide the exiles of the Commune themselves, the French police agents sent to follow them, and some contemporary commentators, this article 'this article will map the Communards' London and investigate how Communards navigated, wrote and thought about the parts of the city that were important to them. Sharing the capital with its own citizens as well as communities from across the continent and beyond, the Communards made their own unique interventions, and discharged a particular political atmosphere as they navigated London and its people, both friendly and hostile.

The Paris Commune of 1871 was a radical experiment in government. Following the Franco-Prussian war of the previous year, and in defiance of Adolphe Thiers' newly elected provisional republican government (under control of a monarchist assembly), the Central Committee of the Commune governed Paris for seventy-two days in the spring of 1871. As a result of the declaration of the Commune and the attempts made by the provisional government to regain control of the city, Paris became the battle ground for a bloody civil war. In May 1871 *la semaine sanglante* brought the Commune to a brutal close with the deaths of thousands of Communards.² Following the defeat of the Commune, thousands more Communards fled France to avoid imprisonment or death. As a result, and due in large part

to Britain's liberal asylum policy at the time, around 3500 Communards (including their families) arrived in Britain in the early 1870s.

This article is an exploration of these exiled Communards within the geography of London. It will consider how the urban landscape of London was a vital part of the experience and narrative of exile, and how the city itself was both an enabler and an inhibitor of collaboration, cooperation, and fraternisation between exiled Communards in London and their British and foreign peers. The spatial configurations of London's radical and exile communities, and the ways in which Communards interacted with those they crossed paths with is vital in understanding how some of the ideas that came out of the Commune permeated London's radical scene. Thinking about the movement of ideas this way has implications for the history of ideas more generally. Contextualising ideas should not just be about ideas in the context of other ideas.³ The social, spatial and emotional context of ideas, and the conditions under which they are exchanged and appropriated is key to understanding their significance. In short, ideas do not move around on their own, and they are not impervious to their surroundings.

A consideration of the Communard exiles in London of course speaks to the substantial literature on nineteenth-century communities of political exile.⁴ Many of these interventions have shed light on often marginalized communities, and have helped to complicate national historical narratives by uncovering an abundance of transnational connections. Constance Bantman's work on the transnational anarchist communities of late nineteenth-century Britain has been particularly useful in thinking about informal activist networks and the importance of understanding how and where these networks operated.⁵ What follows has been encouraged by this body of work, and shares in its desire to document the movement of people, ideas, and cultures across borders. Specific to the refugees of the

Commune in Britain, Paul Martinez's 1981 DPhil thesis was for almost 30 years the only dedicated study.⁶ His is a collective history of the exiles in London from 1871 to 1880. Martinez paints a fairly bleak picture of the realities of exile and concludes that both the French exiles and their British hosts were generally indifferent to each other's political agitations – for Martinez the Communards' experience in London was characterized by a 'mutual incomprehension' and a 'pervasive sentiment of isolation.'⁷ My research suggests differently, and in this article I will illuminate how the history of the exiled Communards in Britain intersects with the history of British radicals and socialists in the period 1871-1900. Martinez wrote the history of these exiles because it was unwritten. My motivation is different – I want to show how the Paris Commune influenced British radical thinking in the late nineteenth century by showing how exiled Communards affected the radical mapping of London in this period. The refugees of the Commune operated as points of intersection between French political culture and British political culture, and their time in Britain left a conspicuous mark on the mindscape, and landscape of London.

Illuminating the significance of the Communards in London also highlights some of the more cosmopolitan elements in the vibrant and varied radical clublife of 1870s London, and in doing so challenges the still pervasive 'continuity thesis' which characterizes the period between the end of Chartism and the socialist revival of the 1880s as a period of largely uncontested popular Liberalism.⁸ While popular Liberalism was certainly persistent, there existed important and influential currents of radical internationalism and cosmopolitan socialisms of which the refugees of the Commune formed a part. Examining interactions between Communards, other international refugees, and domestic radical groups and individuals in the decades before the socialist revival reveals alternative ideas and influences, outside of a popular liberal tradition, that provided stimulus for the reform impulses of the

period. Moreover, these interactions highlight how European political ideas and cultures were incorporated into the political imagination of British radicals in the period 1871-1900. Too often British political movements, particularly British socialism, have been presented as being wilfully impervious to developments on the continent. Instead, this article argues that in order to find these sometimes more affective and ancillary foreign influences, it is important to think spatially.

This article will consider the physical presence of exiled Communards in London, and how the places they populated and visited helped to spark these intellectual interconnections between themselves and other radicals. While many encounters were planned, many more were initially simply a product of proximity. Thus, in order to understand the ways in which the exiles of the Commune interacted with their British counterparts, and indeed the influence exerted by the exiles of the Commune in London, it is vital to consider how the exile map of London corresponded with, extended, and even redrew parts of the existing radical mapping of London. In carving out spaces for intellectual exchange, exiles moved within and across various communities and physical places. This article suggests that in order properly to judge the intellectual implications of the presence of Communard exiles in London it is crucial to seek out traces of their political influence in the spaces and places within which they occurred.

The 'spatial turn' of the past decades has produced a vast literature in which the key concepts of place and space have been wrestled over, defined and redefined. Historians, geographers, sociologists and philosophers have shown that cities and buildings, streets, rooms, and monuments are not static in their meanings or associations. Instead, places are constantly reincarnated as ordinary citizens produce and reproduce social and public spaces, and imbue them with new meanings.⁹ The fluidity of the concepts of space and place can

make them hard to pin down, and often even harder to utilize within an historical enquiry in any meaningful way.¹⁰ Perhaps most relevant here, Christina Parolin's work on venues or spaces of popular politics that existed outside of explicitly political institutions in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, namely the prison, the tavern and the radical theatre, has been useful in terms of showing how ideas of space and place can survive outside of the abstract, and valuably inform studies of intellectual and cultural life in historic London.¹¹ This article will show how other venues - pubs, shops, reading rooms, and club rooms - in a particular part of London became places of importance for an international cohort of radicals with overlapping interests, and facilitated the creation of spaces of collaboration and intellectual exchange. While Parolin thinks about space and place within her own specific historical framework, Katrina Navickas's study of radical reclamation of public spaces by protest movements in Northern England in the early nineteenth century utilizes theories of space in a slightly different way - with a focus on the idea of *public* space, and on the ways in which protest is in part predicated on the subversion of certain spatial codes.¹² Meanwhile, Rosemary Ashton's excellent study of Victorian Bloomsbury bears testament to the ways in which physical places are relevant and indeed sometimes central to the development of intellectual communities.¹³ These differing ways of invoking spatial concepts speak to the broad range of ideas attached to the terms space and place. As Doreen Massey, herself a key theorist of space/place, particularly with regard to social and gender relations, wrote in her introduction to *Space, Place, and Gender*, 'both concepts are incredibly mobile' and so in using them we must define our use clearly and 'not pretend to be exhaustive.'¹⁴

Therefore, to define clearly my own framework: people create figurative spaces within which to conduct relationships and to exchange ideas, thoughts, and intimacies. These spaces of exchange can be mobile; they can operate across various sites or places. But,

importantly, these spaces are not invulnerable to the physical places within which they operate. In other words, it matters *where* people meet and *where* discussions take place. It matters because people respond to their surroundings: they respond to the subtle atmospheres that make a place variously inviting, hostile, affecting, stirring, or fearsome. Generating spaces of intellectual kinship, comradeship, and intimacy, therefore, is shaped by both people *and* place. This article is about some of these places: physical places in London that were invested with a multitude of meanings by the various individuals and groups who made use of them at the end of the nineteenth century. The exiles of the Commune who came to London were part of a Communard community, a French community, a metropolitan community, as well as political, radical and international communities, and each of these communities occupied or were affiliated with various places in the city, sometimes simultaneously. Therefore, in order to understand how the exiles of the Commune interacted with and influenced their contemporaries, it is vital to uncover the overlapping and interconnected nature of these places and their people. Doing so is the focus of this article.

The social and spatial context in which British actors absorbed and appropriated ideas from the Commune is key to understanding the importance they attached to the event. Mapping these varied, affective, and sometime chaotic interactions between Communards and British activists tells us something about the way radical and socialist politics worked in late nineteenth-century Britain. The fact that ideas coming out of the Commune spread around Britain often via extra-institutional channels - via informal and often neighbourhood-centred networks - is not incidental to the study of progressive politics in this period, but rather it is *instrumental* to our understanding of the mechanics of late nineteenth-century socialism in Britain. The fluid and precarious nature of many radical and socialist institutions in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and the layered and contradictory meanings

that propagators of radical programmes and philosophies attached to the ideas they propagated, means that a history of these ideas must, by necessity, be sensitive to the social, cultural, spatial and emotional contexts in which they moved. The ‘continuity thesis’ has remained so pervasive precisely because locating some of the radical ideas, groupings and influences detailed in this article requires a methodological shift. The institutional record can only tell us so much. Only by understanding how radical communities in London overlapped, crossed-paths, and created shared spaces of intimacy in different parts of the city, can we begin to appreciate the diversity and vitality of the informal intellectual worlds inhabited by refugees of the Commune and their British sympathizers in London.

What follows has in part been inspired by Stan Shipley’s 1971 History Workshop pamphlet *Club Life and Socialism in Mid-Victorian London*, which Raphael Samuel described in the foreword as ‘neither a narrative of organisations, nor a summary of ideas; instead [Shipley] looks at the political culture in which [ideas] were formed.’¹⁵ Here I am concerned with the political cultures in which the Paris Communards both found themselves in, and helped to create, and it seems that thinking spatially can add a significant dimension to such a study of intellectual cultures in London. Shipley begins by recounting a story remembered by the Austrian Marxist Max Beer (1864–1943) who lived in exile in London for a few years in the 1890s:

In the Spring of 1895 I passed a house at the junction of Tottenham Street and Cleveland Street...in the window of the ground floor living-room a number of Chartist pamphlets and Radical books...were laid out for sale...I entered the room and met there an elderly gentleman...I selected some [pamphlets] by Bronterre O’Brien and Thorold Rogers, paid him the price, and then ventured to ask him his name. He replied:

‘My name is [William] Townshend.’

‘Townshend!...This is a name known to me. I think I saw it among the signatures of the *Address on the Civil War in France* (1871) issued by the General Council of the International, that is by Karl Marx’.

‘That’s it’, he replied. ‘I was a member of the General Council, and sat there with Marx for several years’.¹⁶

The General Council of the First International on which Townshend sat, had met regularly, more than twenty years previously, just down the road from Townshend’s makeshift bookshop, at 33 Rathbone Place (north-west of present-day Tottenham Court Road Station).¹⁷ In the intervening years the streets and places around there had been the meeting houses, pubs, and clubs of a wealth of radical clubs, both national and international. Foreign radicals like Beer had shared these places with British radicals, socialists, secularists, and freethinkers, as well as revolutionaries from across the continent, who were reading and absorbing ideas on the Commune and the ideas of old Chartists like O’Brien whose followers had met in the same streets in the years before the International existed. Beer’s passage seems to capture perfectly the layered radicalism of the area and the varied national and international political aspirations of its inhabitants and visitors. The Communard refugees were a part of this story and as what follows will show, they helped to invest this part of London (now Fitzrovia) with the international radical atmosphere that Max Beer found there.

A historian looking for tangible, material *lieux de mémoires* might miss the Communards. Unlike previous French communities in London the Communards did not leave behind a prominent building or Church;¹⁸ and unlike other notable continental revolutionaries there exists no graves to visit in leafy London cemeteries; there are no blue plaques dedicated to the Communards or their meeting places. Instead the Communards’

heritage lingered within the character of certain communities and neighbourhoods and became part of the radical atmosphere of pre-First World War London. And by thinking spatially, by mapping the Communards' London, it is possible to uncover some of these connections and legacies that might otherwise remain obscured.

I.

The vast majority of Communard exiles that arrived in Britain stayed in London. A small number settled in Manchester, Nottingham, and Edinburgh, but this was a relatively tiny minority. Paul Martinez estimated the size of the Communard refugee community in London, to be around 1500 adult male refugees, 600 women and 1200 children.¹⁹ It was large enough for Karl Marx to declare rather dramatically in July 1871 that 'London is overrun with refugees'.²⁰ However, despite their relatively significant numbers, in much of the literature on exiles in London the Communards often appear as homogenized French refugees as part of a longer narrative of the French in London. For example, in Janvrin and Rawlins' recent *The French in London*, the Communards receive only a couple of paragraphs within a much broader chapter titled 'London, a sanctuary for the politically persecuted.'²¹ Janvrin and Rawlins present the Communards as just another group in a long lineage of political exiles arriving from France, preceded by the deposed sovereigns of the Napoleonic Wars, the Bonapartists, the 1848 revolutionaries, and followed by the anarchists who came after 1880. In a similar vein Thomas Jones and Robert Tombs' short chapter in *A History of the French in London* (2013) treats the mid-century Republican exiles and the Communards together, and so gives the impression of there being a kind of standardized nineteenth-century left-wing French refugee.²² Certainly, there were overlaps between the two generations of exiles (some exiles, like Pierre Vésinier, had participated in both struggles and spent two separate exiles in London²³), and the various French communities in London were

often politically conflated by the nineteenth-century press. However, this homogenized picture obscures some of the significance that can be garnered from a more focused study of exiles of the Commune, and undermines the agency of many Communards who asserted themselves within the geography of London and carved out political spaces of their own.

In the most obvious sense, mapping places that were focal points within the Communard community demonstrates that the exiles of the Commune were distinct from previous French communities; they did not settle solely where their compatriot predecessors had. In fact, Communards expanded the traditional French refugee quarters in Soho (established in the sixteenth century with the arrival of the French Huguenots) and spread northwards, to the northern (Soho Square) end of Soho, and across Oxford Street towards what is now Fitzrovia. The term Fitzrovia first came into usage in the 1940s, before that the area was often conflated with Soho, or vaguely demarcated as being north of Oxford Street or in the streets around Fitzroy Square.²⁴ As Adolphe Smith, our Communard guide noted, the older, more established French quarter in Soho continued to serve the Communards, being particularly appreciated for its numerous and varied French food establishments - notably the *Hotel des Bons Amis* on Old Compton Street at which 'a French dinner, soup, two courses, salad, dessert, half a bottle of wine, and a demi-tasse of black coffee, could be obtained for the modest sum of eighteenpence all included.'²⁵ However, the Communards' more northerly quarters were home to the places the Communards demarcated as being more *politically* important. Many Communards found that the southern part of Soho, the area around Leicester Square where most *démoc-socs* of the 1850s had resided had become home to an influx of prostitutes which had unfavourably changed the character of the area while paradoxically causing rents to rise.²⁶ Also, as one police spy noted, the exiles of the previous generation were often hostile to the Communards: 'all the 1848 refugees who settled in

London and who have more or less successful institutions are careful not to associate with those of 1871. Also, the refugees of 1848 are treated as conservative by the Communards and therefore the Communards do not get effective help from them.²⁷ There were some French philanthropic societies that had been set up in London in the 1850s - notably the *Société Fraternelle*, established in September 1850, which sought to unite the disparate French political refugees of the mid-century through mutual aid.²⁸ But while the *Société Fraternelle* offered some much needed practical assistance to the arriving Communards in the very early days of their exile, the *Société* was often unsympathetic to the politics of the Communards, and vice versa, and they went their separate ways.²⁹

The lacklustre and even hostile *political* reception granted to the Communards by existing French communities helped to push the Communards further towards radical communities; areas that presented opportunities for Communards to find politically friendly places, and places out of which Communards could operate their own clubs and associations. Many Communards therefore set up a new “neighbourhood” and ‘sought for lodgings between the Tottenham Court Road and Newman Street, and as far north as Fitzroy Square.’³⁰ Jules Vallès, Communard, radical journalist and editor of the Commune’s most famous daily newspaper *Le Cri du peuple*, wrote in his *La Rue à Londres* that due to the infamous reputation of Soho as a den of iniquity ‘we [Communards] instinctively moved away from the cursed neighbourhood: instead it was on the side of Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, that the Commune exiles planted their tent.’³¹ Vallès himself lived for a time at 2 Bedford Street, Bedford Square, between Tottenham Court Road and the British Museum.³² While the choice of area in which to settle was largely conditioned by practicalities – limited funds and a desire to avoid the most notorious parts of Soho, while still wishing to remain within proximity of French speaking areas – moving northwards meant that Communards

expanded the boundaries of the existing French communities in London and marked out their own places. In doing so they helped to further establish Fitzrovia (particularly the areas around Charlotte Street, Windmill Street and Newman Passage) as politically charged areas which became home to several clubs and international meeting places. A journalist in the *Examiner* noted that while the area around the Leicester Square was the traditional French quarter, if one travelled 'north' they would 'hear, amidst the rattle of dominoes and dice, the expatriated Communist heaping curses on his compatriots.'³³ Clearly there was a noticeable distinction between different French populations, and the Communards were often seen as belligerently political in contrast with their more moderate and assimilated compatriots. For Smith, this was part of the Communards' legacy: 'thus, to this day [1909], we have the political foreign quarter in the Fitzroy Square district, north of Oxford Street, and the non-political foreign quarter south of Oxford Street in the Soho District. Of course this demarcation line is not absolute, and the two elements somewhat overlap each other.'³⁴

Our guide Smith frequented several of the most notable Communard hotspots of Fitzrovia, including the Communards kitchen – *La Marmite* – which was established in Newman Passage, the narrow passage between Newman Street and Rathbone Place, in 1871. The kitchen was situated 'on the top floor of so wretched a building that there was not space for a staircase, but the room was reached by means of a ladder with a very greasy rope that served in the stead of a balustrade. But here any refugee who could prove that he had fought for the Paris Commune was able to obtain a meal for twopence.'³⁵ The English Positivists Edward Beesly and Frederic Harrison and their friends were supporters of the kitchen as a political charity and they also established evening classes in Francis Street, on the other side of Tottenham Court Road, where French refugees were offered free English language tuition.³⁶ Also nearby was the Communard exile '[Victor] Richard, the prosperous French

grocer in Charlotte Street...whose shop has been for many years a head centre, where political refugees, as they arrive from the Continent, go for advice and help in finding lodgings or work, and where, of course, the continental police agents also flock so as to spy upon the land.’³⁷ Just down the road from Richard’s shop, also in Charlotte Street, a Frenchwoman, Elizabeth Audinet owned a restaurant - ‘a home of scoundrels and rascals’ as one aggrieved police agent put it – which was host to several banquets held in honour of the anniversary of the Commune.³⁸

These places, the soup kitchen and the grocer’s, were community centres, places with practical purposes that served newly arriving or struggling Communards. They were also political places – meeting spots for planning and discussing and making connections. Richard was a member of the International and was a well-connected and locally celebrated revolutionary - apparently he sold only red beans, not “reactionary” white ones.³⁹ The British press later described Richard’s shop as a ‘shady haunt’ within which you could find the famous Communard Louise Michel and others ‘discussing the crises of the bourgeoisie and...the vengeance which will one day fall on that obnoxious class.’⁴⁰ Richard’s grocery, established in 1871 upon his arrival, served as an informal political hub in Fitzrovia for more than two decades. This little shop on Charlotte Street obliged radicals, revolutionaries and anarchists from various corners of Europe and is testament to the place-making of many Communards and their attempts to create spaces for political interaction, despite the hardships of exile. The Communards were later joined in some of these streets, Charlotte Street, Rathbone Street and Newman Street, by German socialist exiles expelled by Bismarck in the late 1870s, and, as Constance Bantman has shown, many Communard meeting places later became the pubs and places that were important to the transnational anarchist communities of the 1890s.⁴¹ Socialists from Norway and Sweden established their

Scandinavian Club on Rathbone Place, and Berners Street (two streets west of Newman Street) became home to the Jewish anarchist club.⁴² In other words, the Communards left a legacy in London: they helped to endow parts of the city with a certain spirit; a particular radical atmosphere.

Often the depiction of parts of London teeming with political refugees from the Continent seems to exclude, or have been excluded from, British radical places - the pubs and clubs and meeting halls of British radical groups. However, within the British radical mapping of London, Fitzrovia had long been established as a dissident neighbourhood. The presence of the Communards further amplified this radical character and brought a more pronounced cosmopolitanism to the area, but it did not displace the radical residents - mainly secularists and freethinkers - that preceded it. Chartist groups had made Fitzrovia their home in the 1840s and 1850s, as had the O'Brienites and the early socialists of the 1860s and 1870s. And, as Rosemary Ashton has shown, Fitzrovia attracted many of the pioneers of Christian Socialism in the 1840s and 50s: Castle Street was home to the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations - the forerunner of the Working Men's College that opened on Red Lion Square in 1854.⁴³ Also nearby, Gower Street (on the Bloomsbury side of the Fitzrovia/Bloomsbury borderlands), was central to the dissenters, non-conformists, secularists and reformers who were instrumental in founding University College London (UCL) in 1826.⁴⁴ The London club movement mushroomed in the 1870s and numerous groups joined the remnants of old groups, and the newly installed Communards, in the streets in and around Fitzrovia.⁴⁵ Andreas Scheu, the Austrian social democrat who emigrated to London in 1874, remembered joining an informal group of Marxists who met in the upstairs of the Blue Posts Pub on Newman Street (until 1882 when the club moved to 49 Tottenham Street, just off Charlotte Street.⁴⁶) The group included Communards such

as Leo Frankel, and several British workers and trade unionists.⁴⁷ Frankel regularly gave talks on the Commune there.⁴⁸ Various Commune celebrations were held around Fitzrovia each year. In 1873, organized by the British Federal Council of the International, the anniversary was celebrated on Great Castle Street, just north of Oxford Street, and in 1874 the Manhood Suffrage League organized a commemoration on Little Pulteney Street.⁴⁹

A particularly good example of this shared place-heritage was Cleveland Hall, just south of Fitzroy Square. Cleveland Hall was one of the most important centres of secularism and freethought in London between the early 1860s and the late 1870s.⁵⁰ Various secularists, Chartists, socialists, freethinkers, feminists and Positivists gave lectures at the Hall in these years.⁵¹ Frederic Harrison led a lecture series on English Industrial Towns in 1862-1863,⁵² while George Holyoake, the secularist, gave a history of the cooperative movement in Britain.⁵³ A decade or so later socialists and anarchists of the 1880s used Cleveland Hall. Writing in 1887 the socialist William Morris remembered a meeting he had attended at the Hall (probably the Commune anniversary celebration of that year):

Tuesday I took the chair at the meeting...at Cleveland Hall...it is the head-quarters of what I should call the orthodox Anarchists: Victor Dave the leading spirit there. Of course there were many 'foreigners' there, and also a good sprinkling of our people [Socialist League] and I suppose of the [Social Democratic] Federation also.⁵⁴

The 'Cleveland Hall people,' as Morris referred to them, were an anarchist working men's club that met at Cleveland Hall on a regular basis through the 1880s.⁵⁵ For four decades Cleveland Hall was a centre of political life, both formal and informal, for a motley parade of radicals. The Communard exiles were very much a part of this heritage: the pronounced internationalism of the area around the Hall at the end of the century was initiated by the

Communards who had made Fitzrovia their political home in the early 1870s. Moreover, in the 1870s Cleveland Hall became a place where the concerns of British radicals and those of Communard refugees could converge. In May 1881 the Hall was host to a public meeting held on “The Right of Asylum in England to Political Refugees,” and to protect against the attempts to bring England into the International League against the Foreign Refugees.⁵⁶ In March 1876 the anniversary celebration of the Commune, organized by the Manhood Suffrage League, was held at Cleveland Hall. Frank Kitz - a British working-class radical, garment dyer, and committed internationalist - described the celebration as ‘a most enthusiastic demonstration’. Attended by ‘a large number of English working men’, he felt that it ‘marked the beginning of the [socialist] revival.’⁵⁷ In June 1874 a banquet was held at Cleveland Hall to celebrate the arrival of the Communards Paschal Grousset, François Jourde, and others who had escaped from the penal camps of New Caledonia, to which they had been banished by the Third Republic following the Commune. There were reportedly more than 120 attendees. Most of these were Communard refugees but many British and other nationalities were also represented - John Hales, trade unionist and secretary of the General Council of the First International, spoke on behalf of the workingmen of Britain.⁵⁸ These attendees were not all new to one another. Many were neighbours and would have seen each other in shops, pubs and clubs in the area. For example, Harriet Law, a prominent freethinker and feminist, and the only woman on the General Council of the International, spent a lot of time in Fitzrovia. Eleanor Marx described Law as one of the first women ‘to recognize the importance of a woman’s organisation from a proletarian point of view.’⁵⁹ Law was a frequent speaker at Cleveland Hall, particularly in the late 1870s, in part because the secular movement, unlike many of the early socialist clubs, offered Victorian women opportunities to become politically active as organizers, public speakers, activists and writers. What is more, secularism was the means by which Law believed that women’s emancipation

could be achieved, and she renounced religion as the chief cause of female oppression.⁶⁰ Law had previously encountered many of her Communard neighbours in various places and contexts. In late 1871 she had given a lecture on 'the trials of the Communist refugees' at a meeting of the International.⁶¹ Law sat on the General Council with the Communards Victor Delahaye, Eduard Valliant, Charles Longuet, and Leo Frankel. She was also a member of the collaborative International Labour Union (ILU) with Delahaye.⁶² All of these exiled Communards could regularly be found around the various haunts of Fitzrovia, and they were all members of the *La Société des Réfugiés de la Commune à Londres* which met at the Spread Eagle pub, just a short walk from Cleveland Hall.

Located just down from the intersection of Cleveland and Newman Street, at 6 Charles Street (now Mortimer Street, next to the old Middlesex Hospital), the Spread Eagle was another place that had a long and varied life. This pub was one of the preferred meeting places of the Communards' *La Société des Réfugiés*⁶³ and the *Société Fraternelle*.⁶⁴ In the 1850s it had been one of the pubs used for the meetings of the Soho Chartists.⁶⁵ In 1877 Frank Kitz started an internationalist club for 'the social democrats of London' there.⁶⁶ Kitz himself spoke French and German and the club was born of a 'meeting of English and foreign workers', for the purpose of 'social enjoyment, but also as a method for propagating the principles of Social and Political Reform.'⁶⁷ The Club met in an upstairs room of the Spread Eagle in the later 1870s, although it seems that many meetings of the 'group' before the club had been properly formed also took place in the same pub in the earlier 1870s.⁶⁸ Charles Murray - a boot closer, former secretary of the Soho Chartists, O'Brienite, and later member of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) - also organized meetings at the Spread Eagle. Murray lived at 49 Union Street (very close to Middlesex Hospital), and Soho and Fitzrovia was the centre of his political life.⁶⁹ After a visit to Kansas in 1872 to view an experiment in

land sharing, Murray organized meetings at the Spread Eagle at which he gave lectures on his experience and discussed the persistent importance of land nationalisation as a key political strategy.⁷⁰ Thus it was that in the 1870s the Communards, the land nationalisationers, and the revolutionary internationalists were all meeting at the Spread Eagle. The upstairs was the meeting rooms; the downstairs, the bar. One might speculate that many of the drinkers in this bar, either arriving at or leaving a meeting, were known to each other and would have perhaps discussed the ways in which the Land question (in which several Communards, notably Paschal Grousset, later became interested with regard to Ireland⁷¹) might relate to the questions of private property under the Commune; or how the politics of the Commune could be understood within a German context, given that revolutionary socialism had since been expatriated from both France and Germany; or perhaps a Communard might have enquired as to where one might find a political pamphlet of one kind or another and have been directed to Townshend's bookshop.

Thinking about Fitzrovia - the streets around Cleveland Hall, the Spread Eagle, Victor Richard's shop and elsewhere - it is very tempting to imagine an intellectually porous utopia. The reality was probably not quite so enchanted - we cannot know exactly what sort of things were discussed between people over a pint, and much of the interaction between Communards and others has left little trace. However, mapping the radicalisms of Fitzrovia shows a cosmopolitan and politicized area, of which the Communards were very much a part. The radical character of the area and the close proximity of Communard refugees to other radical ideas and organisations reveal the Communards' Fitzrovia as a place of cross-pollination. While Communards certainly engaged in Communard-only activity, they also shared places, meeting rooms, beer, food and ideas with their neighbours and contemporaries.

Fitzrovia's politicized cosmopolitan character did not go unnoticed. Descriptions of the refugee areas around Soho and Fitzrovia often mused on this. In the *London Echo* a columnist found in the Communard exile quarters - only a 'bow-shot from the real British Oxford-street, and at less than a hundred paces from the thriving but somewhat unromantic Tottenham-court Road' - there was 'a veritable realisation of their [Communards] pet and primary idea - *Fraternité*.'⁷² Within the Communist clubs of the area, wrote the *Echo* 'the room is crowded with groups of such heterogeneous composition.'⁷³ Multiple languages were spoken and various doctrines represented. The anti-Commune forces were also concerned with the geography of the Communard exiles. The hostile press often presented its own explorations of Soho and Fitzrovia in order to stir fears of the proximity of dangerous continental Reds. The satirical magazine *Fun* caricatured a place 'in the most French recesses of Cischanneline Gaul, which is called Soho in the maps of London, a Frencher deep still, a tiny region where the exile can for a while forget that he has exchanged the land of the *Marseillaise*, the *mouchard*, and mazagrin [sic] for the soil of freedom, of the bobby, of the *porter-biere*.'⁷⁴ This 'colony' was decidedly French: 'in the bakers' shops the bread is in the form of long loaves, like giant rolls' and the neighbourhood is crammed with 'little *cafés* and *restaurants*... thoroughly French institutions.'⁷⁵ And yet it was a specifically *London* French area - a place where London and Paris collided. Foreign smells and sounds drifted across familiar British streets: 'the breezes...of a French bystreet are wafted unmistakably to the olfactories...an odour less of sanctity than of *absinthe* floats about them.' Despite these trappings of Paris, 'the London fog has penetrated to their marrow, and made them gloomy and depressing, their *garçons* flabby and feeble-kneed.'⁷⁶ Here were places where the two metropolises blurred, and French and British even began to take on the odours and characteristics of one another. A decade later *Fun* remained affronted by the character of the neighbourhood. In 1883 one writer comically suggested that the dangerous schemes

propagated by Louise Michel and her Communist friends were an attempt at the ‘Soho-cial Revolution.’⁷⁷

Another very interested party were the numerous police agents sent from Paris to keep track of the Communards. These agents were of course very concerned with the places and circles within which the exiles moved, and they described bars and cafes in which informal and often secretive meetings between Communards and the related activities of various British radicals took place. These reports show that the Communard refugees were not wholly insular. Certainly in Fitzrovia there were places that were *more* French or *more* British or *more* German but there were also plenty of accounts of people and ideas blurring these lines and frequenting multiple places and communities. This was cosmopolitanism in action. For example, one informer wrote to his superior in October 1871 that he had ‘penetrated the places where [he] could collect the most important information: for example, the Deutscher Club, 32 Foley Street, which is one of the meeting places of all the fanatic cosmopolitans.’⁷⁸ There were numerous attempts by Communards, British radicals, and various other internationalists to set up new cosmopolitan clubs or societies. Some ventures did not come to fruition, some did not last long, and others left no record at all and therefore agents’ reports on early meetings are the only remaining trace. Several reports recount meetings witnessed between Communards and British friends, as well as with well-known internationalists including Marx, taking place in various pubs in Fitzrovia. One agent warned of ‘a new international club, headed by a Englishman named Stephens, under the protectorate of Karl Marx, [which] has just been established in Great Castle Street, Oxford Street.’⁷⁹ Another reported that the Communard Pierre Vesinier and the internationalist Bernard Landeck were organising a new society that would be both political and philanthropic and encourage internationalist sympathies.⁸⁰ These collaborative attempts

show that the area was lively with activity that was associated both with Communards and with the burgeoning internationalism of the area, and that Communard exiles served as impetus for several collaborative ventures.

Many of these efforts replicated the types of community organisation that had been important during the Paris Commune itself. As Martin Phillip Johnson has shown ‘the Commune was both created and shaped by the political culture of popular organizations.’⁸¹ Johnson argues that the organization of the Commune was ‘rooted in neighbourhoods’ and relied on the politics of association, which meant ‘that clubistes represented a key segment of the population devoted to the Commune.’⁸² So the bulk of committed Communards had been clubbers in Paris - they formed, shaped and enacted their politics through club life, both formal and informal. From the countless official organisations such as the *Club des Proletaires*, the *Cercle des Jacobins*, and the *Association Républicaine* which were organized around *quartiers*, to informal café cultures within which ‘opponents of the Empire socialized and learned to trust or detest one another,’ Communard politics were expressed through ‘associationism, which had economic, political, and social facets.’⁸³ Radicals in Paris also created fluctuating webs of informal connections via what W. Scott Haine has identified as ‘café friendships.’⁸⁴ These friendships were ‘simultaneously intimate and anonymous,’⁸⁵ as locals frequented neighbourhood cafes and struck up often politicized friendships that could be sustained for many months or longer, without the ‘friends’ ever exchanging names or contact details. In 1871, the Communard exiles carried many of these traditional modes of organising with them to London and attempted to replicate this political culture. Through political organisations, informal hubs like the shops and kitchens of Fitzrovia, and philanthropic and educational societies, Communard modes of political socialisation (both collaborative and Communard-only) could be utilized within the new environment of

London, and in doing so gave rise to new diverse communities that combined some of the practices of English Clubbers with the *clubistes* of the Commune. Crossing paths in pubs and shops in the streets north of Oxford Street, one can imagine a plethora of conversational political exchanges that connected these political cultures. Anthony Taylor has described British informal club life in the pubs of mid-century London as forming, ‘the infrastructure of London radicalism...a labyrinth of acknowledged assembly places bound the movement together...this was a kaleidoscopic world of shifting political fragments and organisations.’⁸⁶ Taylor argues that the focus on 1840s and 1880s club life has neglected the vibrant in between period. Certainly, I would argue that politicized socialisation in the informal clubs and meeting places of Fitzrovia 1870s and 80s constituted a ‘kaleidoscopic world’ of political ideas and intellectual exchanges, and one that was increasingly cosmopolitan. When thought about his way the cross-pollination between British radicals and Communards in parts of London is easy to conjure. This blending of radical practises is what helped to produce the hybridity of the Fitzrovia area at the end of the nineteenth century. As Doreen Massey understood, places ‘are always constructed out of articulations of social relations ... which are not only internal to that locale but which link them to elsewhere. Their ‘local uniqueness’ is always already a product in part of ‘global’ forces, where global in this context refers not necessarily to the planetary scale, but the geographical beyond, the world beyond the place itself.’⁸⁷ In other words, the marginality of Fitzrovia as an established place of political dissent and politicized sociability allowed Communards to find and create places there in which they could link their own marginalisation to that of the neighbours they found there, thus creating new and radical hybrid places.

II.

So far this article has focussed on the streets, clubs and places of a very small area in order to consider how Communard refugees helped to shape the political atmosphere of Fitzrovia. But of course, there were places of importance beyond this area. To the south-east of Fitzrovia Communards and their comrades, those referred to by the French police agents who watched them as ‘Holborniens,’ found political and intellectual communities in that eponymous area.⁸⁸ Some Communards with greater means moved out to the leafier suburbs of London, for example Édouard Vaillant - member of the Commune Council for the 20th *arrondissement* - was joined in exile by his wealthy mother and lived very comfortably in Kentish Town.⁸⁹ Most notable though, was a place just beyond the imprecise borders of Fitzrovia and Soho. The proximity of Bloomsbury (a more intellectually prestigious area) was part of what made the close-but-more-affordable Fitzrovia area so attractive. Just nearby, in the heart of Bloomsbury, could be found a place that provided intellectual stimulation without national or strict political affiliation, and that was accessible to a wealth of radical activists. This esteemed place, just a short walk from Fitzrovia, was the reading room of the British Museum.

‘The fact which most strikes us in connection with the Museum Library is its wonderful accessibility...in many cases it serves as a shelter, - a refuge, in more senses than one, for the destitute:’⁹⁰ so wrote nineteenth-century feminist poet Amy Levy. In this refuge, according to the Communard Jules Vallès, ‘they served every reader equally, no matter how he was dressed.’⁹¹ Vallès, who was notoriously disparaging towards British attitudes, culture, food, weather, and just about everything else in *La Rue à Londres*, identified the reading room of the British Museum as the only redeeming feature of the grey metropolis. In fact, Vallès found in the reading room a place that not only impressed him as an excellent scholarly resource, but also exemplified for him a powerful kind of internationalism and camaraderie:

The chief librarians speak French; remarkable men, of whom some have been the honour of Cambridge or Oxford. It seems as if they are taking the task of making exile less difficult for those who are far from their country, and they place themselves at the disposal of all...the most obscure as well as the most famous, with a perfect grace, helping each...they believe in God and the Queen, but really they are of the International of Labour.⁹²

The reading room at the British Museum had not always been open to all - in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century it would have been impossible to penetrate without a title or some well-placed friends. However, after the opening of Sydney Smirke's domed reading room in 1857, under the librarianship of Anthony Panizzi, the conditions for gaining entry were relaxed somewhat and the reading room attracted, according to Amy Levy, an increasingly 'motley crowd of readers.'⁹³

Countless socialists from Britain, Europe and beyond used the reading room of the British museum in the late nineteenth century. The British socialist Ernest Belfort Bax met the Communards Paschal Grousset and Albert Regnard in the reading room, and their interactions formed part of Bax's conversion to socialism. He wrote that 'it was the Commune that awakened me...to an interest in the Social problem, and the first Socialists that I met were members or adherents of the Commune. There was Pascal Grousset, a handsome man, who in the later seventies was a regular attendant at the British Museum Reading-room...I used to see a good deal of him, and often talked over the Commune.'⁹⁴ In a letter to a friend Vallès described the reading room as 'a town in itself, full of riches with benign administrators...two yards away sits Regnard, with Lissagaray ten yards farther on. Pilotell's⁹⁵ just passed and Pyat⁹⁶ is due any moment. It's a whole world. Everything and everyone's here. We meet between the rows of desks like people in a village street.'⁹⁷ And it

was quite a village. Eleanor Marx translated the Communard Lissagaray's famous history of the Commune there. George Bernard Shaw, often seen 'buried in books'⁹⁸ at the British Museum, first read Marx's *Capital* in the reading room where Marx himself had written it,⁹⁹ and Annie Besant, the SDF and Fabian activist, obtained her readers ticket in 1874.¹⁰⁰ In the late 1870s George Gissing wrote his novel *Workers in the Dawn* (1880) under the auspicious dome of the reading room. Penning the Paris Commune-obsessed character John Pether, who envisions a Commune gloriously erupting on the streets of London, would suggest that Gissing perhaps conversed with the real-life Communards that sat around him as he wrote. Gissing's experience of the reading room itself is documented in his most famous novel, *New Grub Street* (1891), in which the character Jasper explains how 'people who often work there [the reading room of the British Museum] necessarily get to know each other.'¹⁰¹

In her study of late Victorian women writers in the British Museum reading room, Susan Bernstein describes the reading room as blurring the lines between a public and a private space.¹⁰² Similarly the reading room can be thought of as generating both formal and informal spaces of interaction: the performance of being seen at an intellectually prestigious place tempered by the ease of friendly encounters there. Having a cup of tea in the refreshment room or going outside for a smoke all presented opportunities for relaxed conversation.¹⁰³ The readers worked diligently in their rows 'seeking consolation from books in the land of exile'¹⁰⁴ - both literal and figurative exile - and found comfort in those around them. They were at once both strangers and co-conspirators.

The British Museum, like Cleveland Hall and Victor Richard's grocer shop, is a potent example that illustrates how much political engagement and conversing and debating could take place in places that were outside of overtly political institutions. The reading room also illustrates the type of associational intimacy that existed in the places occupied by

Communards and their contemporaries – people struck up conversation with familiar faces, and engaged in friendly and political discussion without necessarily knowing each other's names or having made specific plans to meet. These places illustrate the interconnectedness of many radical activists and exiles in London, and show how parts of the city could be repurposed as radical meeting places and invested with political and social significance.

III.

In 1880 the French government granted a general amnesty to all convicted and indicted Communards. Following the amnesty, the number of Communards in London fell sharply. Those that stayed were generally those who had best assimilated into London life, perhaps married or found lucrative or reliable employment. London itself changed significantly through the last decades of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, and the French communities transformed with it. For Adolphe Smith these were sometimes sad changes, and he lamented the *embourgeoisement* of the old European Soho:

Round the corner of the next street that crosses Greek Street there was another modest restaurant kept by an Austrian. Here, excellent meals could be obtained for eighteenpence...and many an impoverished refugee enjoyed the refinements of continental cookery. In an evil hour, however, for those who are poor but have refined tastes, a journalist was induced to visit the place, and was so delighted that he wrote a lengthy article of praise which was published in *The Times*. This little restaurant used to do an average of thirty dinners per day, but on the morrow of the publication of the article a hundred and thirty strangers came to explore the place and sample the dinner ...The premises had to be enlarged, the poor refugees fled from the place, horrified by the extravagances of the newcomers, the persistency with which they spoke the English tongue and failed to express any revolutionary sentiments. Thus Ketner's

restaurant became known as a fashionable West End resort, but it has lost its historical character, its poor, though interesting frequenters, and indeed Ketner himself has disappeared, for he did not long survive this unhopd-for and sudden prosperity.¹⁰⁵

While the gentrification of the “authentic” is a familiar story in London, Smith’s passage also shows how French refugees, Communard exiles, and others, were forced to navigate wider London and find new areas and neighbourhoods as time went on. Communards became more spread out in the late 1870s and early 1880s because the ties of the exile community became less fundamental to survival, as individual Communards made more and more of their own connections. Many of the places in which they had discussed and enacted their politics changed and transformed, but the Communards left their layer in the strata of radical London, and the spirit with which they endowed parts of the metropolis often long outlasted the exiles themselves.

The radical atmosphere around Fitzrovia made Communards exiles feel freer to establish their own political enterprises, both formal and informal, and in doing so they contributed a specific flavour, or ‘aroma’ as *Fun* would have it, to the London radical scene, which then spurred newer radical communities. And, significantly, whether or not all Communard exiles socialized or politicked in Fitzrovia and around, many of their contemporaries, as well as later generations of radicals, associated the refugees of the Commune as being an important part of the radical atmosphere of the area. Therefore, the Communard presence, both real and imagined, had an impact on the radical political character and culture of this part of London.

Cities teem with legacies that are hard to articulate - that peculiar but perceptible quality that lingers in streets and buildings and exposes the subtle sediment layers of a long and varied past.¹⁰⁶ Only by exposing these layers can we appreciate how and where political

sentiments travelled the informal intellectual worlds of radical London, and in doing so better understand how British radicals experimented with ideas emanating from outside of a popular Liberal tradition, and engaged with continental political ideas. This article has argued that understanding the social life of political ideas is *instrumental* to our understanding of the mechanics of late nineteenth-century socialism in Britain. Informal conversations, heated pub debates, intimate gatherings, and impromptu neighbourhood meetings were as important to the formation and dissemination of socialist ideas in Britain as were the political programmes and ideological tracts of the various organisations and institutions of the period.

As this article has shown, politicized socialisation in certain areas of London - spurred on by the influx of new and exciting radical politics brought by the Communards – shaped fresh political alliances and political philosophies, and helped to create links between British, French, and international activists who frequented the same places. These places – pubs, clubs, shops and streets - became informal political forums, and bear testament to the ways in which the refugees of the Paris Commune put themselves on the map.

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¹ Adolphe Smith, 'Political refugees,' in Walter Besant, *London in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1909).

² For a short summary of the debate surrounding the number of Communards killed see Robert Tombs, 'How bloody was *la semaine sanglante*? A revision', *Historical Journal*, 55 (2012), pp. 679-704.

³ Quentin Skinner and the Cambridge school have shown the importance of contextualising ideas in the context of other ideas. However, this focus can neglect the social context. See, David Wootton, 'The hard look back', *Times Literary Supplement* (2003), pp. 8-10; Richard Whatmore, *What is intellectual history?* (Cambridge, 2016); and James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and context: Quentin Skinner and his critics* (Princeton, NJ, 1988). Peter Gay first used the phrase 'the social history of ideas' in 1964 - see Peter Gay, *The party of humanity: essays in the French Enlightenment* (New York, 1964); and Robert Darnton, 'In search of the Enlightenment: recent attempts to create a social history of ideas', *Journal of Modern History*, 43 (1971), pp. 113-132, p. 113, 114, 132. For a recent example that blends intellectual history and the history of popular movements see J.W. Burrow, *The crisis of reason: european thought, 1848-1914* (New Haven, CT, 2002).

⁴ For example, Bernard Porter, *The refugee question in mid-victorian politics* (Cambridge, 1979); Christine Lattek, *Revolutionary refugees: German socialism in Britain, 1840-1860* (Oxford, 2004); Maurizio Isabella, *Risorgimento in exile: Italian émigrés and the liberal international in the post-Napoleonic Era* (Oxford, 2009); Thomas Jones, 'French republican exiles in Britain, 1848-1870', (unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 2010); Sabine Freitag, (ed.) *Exiles from European revolutions: refugees in mid-Victorian England* (New York, 2003); Sylvie Aprile, *Le siècle des exilés: Bannis et proscrits de 1789 à la Commune* (Paris, 2010).

⁵ Constance Bantman, *The French anarchists in London, 1880-1914: exile and transnationalism in the first globalisation* (Liverpool, 2013).

⁶ The exiled Paris Communards, and the Paris Commune more broadly, in Britain is the subject of my PhD thesis. See Laura C. Forster, "'Scaped from Paris and crossed the narrow sea": the Paris Commune in the British political imagination, 1871-1914' (Unpublished PhD thesis, King's College London, 2018).

⁷ Paul Martinez, 'Paris Communard refugees in Great Britain, 1871-1880', (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 1981), p. 310, p. 410.

⁸ For a good overview of debates around the 'continuity thesis' see Matthew Roberts, *Political movements in urban England, 1832-1914* (London, 2009), esp. ch. 3-5. For the main proponents of the thesis see Eugenio Biagini, *Liberty, retrenchment and reform: popular liberalism in the age of Gladstone, 1860- 1880* (Cambridge, 1992); Eugenio Biagini and Alastair J. Reid (eds.), *Currents of radicalism: popular radicalism, organised labour and party politics in Britain, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1991); James Vernon, *Politics and the people: a study in English political culture, 1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993); Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the people: industrial England and the question of class, c.1848-1914*, (Cambridge 1991). For some critiques of the 'continuity thesis' see, Neville Kirk, *Change, continuity and class: labour in British society, 1850-1920* (Manchester, 1998), esp. pp. 9-12.

⁹ Key theorists of space/place include Henri Lefebvre, *The production of space* (Oxford, 1991); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* (London, 1977); Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places* (Hoboken, NJ, 1996); David Harvey, *Rebel cities: from the right to the city to the urban revolution* (London, 2012); Tim Cresswell, *In place/ out of place: geography, ideology and transgression* (Minneapolis, MS, 1996).

¹⁰ For further discussion of some of these difficulties see, Leif Jerram, 'Space: a useless category for historical analysis?', *History and Theory*, 52 (2013), pp. 400-419.

¹¹ Christina Parolin, *Radical spaces: venues of popular politics in London, 1790 - c. 1845* (Canberra, 2010). Tom Goyens similarly interrogated informal places and drinking cultures to show how and where German anarchists enacted their politics in New York City. See Tom Goyens, *Beer and revolution: the German anarchist movement in New York City, 1880-1914* (Urbana and Chicago, 2007).

¹² Katrina Navickas, *Protest and the politics of space and place, 1789-1848* (Manchester, 2016).

¹³ Rosemary Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury* (New Haven, 2012).

¹⁴ Doreen Massey, *Space, place and gender* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 1.

¹⁵ Raphael Samuel, 'Foreword' in Stan Shipley, 'Club life and socialism in mid-Victorian London,' *History Workshop Pamphlet*, 5 (1971), p. i.

¹⁶ Max Beer, *Fifty years of international socialism* (London, 1935), p. 133-4, quoted in Shipley, *Club life and socialism*, p. 1.

¹⁷ The IWMA moved into the Rathbone Place premises in 1872. See *Documents of the First International* (5 vols., Moscow, undated), V, p. 116, 187.

¹⁸ The nineteenth century French Catholic population left behind the Notre Dame de France, a Catholic church just north of Leicester Square, consecrated in 1868 and still serving London's French population today.

¹⁹ Martinez, 'Communard Refugees,' p. 109.

²⁰ Letter from Karl Marx to Ludwig Kugelmann, 27 July 1871, *Karl Marx Frederick Engels collected works, volume 4: Marx and Engels 1870-1873* (Dagenham, 1987), p. 176.

²¹ Isabelle Janvrin and Catherine Rawlinson, *The French in London: from William the Conqueror to Charles de Gaulle* (London, 2016).

²² Thomas C Jones and Robert Tombs, 'The French left in exile: *Quarante-buitards* and Communards in London, 1848-80,' in Kelly and Cornick (eds.), *A history of the French in London: liberty, equality, opportunity* (London, 2013).

²³ Vésinier was expelled from France by Napoleon III in 1851 and arrived in London via Geneva and Brussels. He returned to France in 1870 and following the Commune fled again to London. His papers are held at the International Institute of Social History (IISH), Amsterdam.

²⁴ A. D. Mills, *A dictionary of London place-names* (Oxford, 2010), p. 90.

²⁵ Smith, 'Political refugees,' p. 404.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 399.

²⁷ Stanford University, Hoover Institute, Boris Nicolaevsky Collection, Series 246, Préfecture de Police, Paris, type written copies of reports on Paris Commune refugees in London (Hereafter BNC PP), 441:6:1369-1372, 27 February 1874.

²⁸ Christine Lattek, *Revolutionary refugees: German socialism in Britain, 1840-1860* (Abingdon, 2006), p. 112.

²⁹ Martinez, 'Communard refugees,' pp. 84-85.

³⁰ Smith, 'Political Refugees,' p. 400.

³¹ Jules Vallès, *La rue à Londres* (Paris, 1884), p. 94.

³² BNC PP, 441:5:1138-1139, 20 August 1873.

³³ 'The Frenchman in London,' *The Examiner*, 22 December, 1877.

³⁴ Smith, 'Political Refugees,' pp. 399-400.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 401.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 401.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 401.

³⁸ Martinez, 'Communard Refugees,' p. 149.

³⁹ John M. Merriman, *The dynamite club: how a bombing in fin-de-siècle Paris ignited the age of modern terror* (New Haven, CT, 2016), p. 120.

⁴⁰ 'London Gossip,' *Birmingham Daily Post*, 27 July 1894.

⁴¹ Bantman, *The French anarchists*, p. 54, 82.

⁴² E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: romantic to revolutionary* (Oakland, 2011[1955]), p. 589.

⁴³ Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury*, p. 251-252.

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- ⁴⁴ Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury*, p. 25-57. For more on the founding of UCL and other Bloomsbury institutions see UCL Bloomsbury Project <<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/bloomsbury-project/>>
- ⁴⁵ Shipley, *Club Life and Socialism*, p. 3.
- ⁴⁶ Mike Pentelow and Marsha Rowe, *Characters of Fitzrovia* (London, 2002), p. 46.
- ⁴⁷ Thompson, *William Morris*, p. 278
- ⁴⁸ J. B. Wright, 'The valiant dead': William Morris and the Paris Commune of 1871,' *The Journal of the William Morris Society*, 13 (1999), p. 37.
- ⁴⁹ *International Herald*, 29 March 1873, 'The Escaped Communists,' *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 5 July 1874.
- ⁵⁰ Edward Royle, *Radicals, secularists and republicans: popular freethought in Britain, 1866-1915* (Manchester, 1980), p. 47.
- ⁵¹ Margot Finn, *After Chartism: class and nation in English radical politics 1848-1874* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 134.
- ⁵² Frederic Harrison, *Autobiographic memoirs* (2 vols., London, 1911), I, p. 265.
- ⁵³ Royle, *Radicals, Secularists, and Republicans*, p. 47.
- ⁵⁴ Quoted in Florence Boos, 'William Morris's 'Socialist Diary,' *History Workshop Journal*, 13 (1982), pp. 1-76, p. 28.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 28.
- ⁵⁶ Advertised in *Freiheit (Freedom): a journal for the diffusion of socialistic knowledge*, 15 May 1881.
- ⁵⁷ Frank Kitz, *Recollections and reflections*, originally published in *Freedom*, January-June 1912. Viewed at <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/kitz/reflections.htm>>, Ch. 2.
- ⁵⁸ 'The escaped Communists', in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 5 July 1874.
- ⁵⁹ Quoted in Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the new Jerusalem: socialism and feminism in the nineteenth century* (London, 1983), p. 283.
- ⁶⁰ David Morgan, 'A Law unto herself', *Socialist History Society Newsletter*, 3 (2013), p. 3.
- ⁶¹ 'International Working Men's Association,' *Manchester Guardian*, 15 January 1872.
- ⁶² Max Nettlau, *Proofs of 'Ein verschollener Nachklang der Internationale: The International Labour Union (London, 1877-78)'* Max Nettlau Papers, no. 1947, folder 2, International Institute Social History (IISH), Amsterdam.
- ⁶³ BNC PP, 441:2:488, 15 June 1872.
- ⁶⁴ Advert in *Qui Vive!* (London), 3 October 1871.
- ⁶⁵ Pentelow and Rowe, *Characters of Fitzrovia*, p. 42.

⁶⁶ *West Central News* (Soho), 25 August, 1877. For more biographical information on Kitz see *Freedom*, July 1912.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Pentelow and Rowe, *Characters of Fitzrovia*, p. 47.

⁶⁹ Shipley, *Club Life and Socialism*, p. 13.

⁷⁰ Pentelow and Rowe, *Characters of Fitzrovia*, p. 43.

⁷¹ Phillipe Daryl (pseudonym of Paschal Grousset), *Ireland's Disease: The English in Ireland* (London, 1888).

⁷² 'The late Commune: the refugees in London scenes (reprinted from the *The London Echo*),' *The New York Times*, 23 September 1871.

⁷³ 'The late Commune'.

⁷⁴ 'Communist refugees in London,' *Fun*, 17 June 1871.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ 'Our extra-special and Miss Louise Michel,' *Fun*, 17 January 1883.

⁷⁸ BNC PP, 441:1:195, 16 October 1871.

⁷⁹ BNC PP, 441:3:676-677, undated - almost certainly early October 1872.

⁸⁰ BNC PP, 441:3:695, 12 October 1872.

⁸¹ Martin Phillip Johnson, *The paradise of association: political culture and popular organisations in the Paris Commune of 1871* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1996), p. 277.

⁸² Johnson, *The Paradise of Association*, p. 286, 173.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 165-171, 19, 5. Maurice Agulhon has worked on the same phenomenon in early and mid-nineteenth century France. See Maurice Agulhon and Janet Lloyd (trans.), *The Republic in the village: the people of the Var from the French Revolution to the Second Republic* (Cambridge, 1982); and Maurice Agulhon, *Le Cercle dans la France bourgeoise, 1810-1848. Étude d'une mutation de sociabilité* (Paris, 1977).

⁸⁴ W. Scott Haine, "'Café Friend': friendship and fraternity in Parisian working-class cafés, 1850-1914', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27 (1992) pp. 607-26, p. 607.

⁸⁵ Haine, 'Café Friend,' p. 607.

⁸⁶ Anthony Taylor, 'A melancholy odyssey among London public houses': radical club life and the unrespectable in mid-nineteenth-century London,' in *Historical Research*, 78 (2005), pp. 529-566, p. 90.

⁸⁷ Doreen Massey, 'Places and their pasts,' *History Workshop Journal*, 39 (1995), pp. 182-192, p.183.

⁸⁸ BNC PP, 441:2:413, undated – probably April 1872.

⁸⁹ L'association des amis de la Commune, <<http://www.commune1871.org/?EDOUARD-VAILLANT-EN-EXIL-A-LONDRES>>

⁹⁰ Amy Levy, 'Readers at the British Museum,' *Atalanta*, April 1 1889.

⁹¹ Jules Vallès to an unnamed fellow Communard. Quoted in David Arkell, 'When the Commune came to Fitzrovia,' *PN Review*, 14 (1987), p. 13.

⁹² Vallès, *La rue à Londres*, p. 254.

⁹³ Levy, 'Readers at the British Museum.' For a detailed discussion of Panizzi and his role in shaping the British Museum Library see Ch. 5 of Ashton, *Victorian Bloomsbury*.

⁹⁴ Ernest Belfort Bax, *Reminiscences and reflexions of a mid and late Victorian*, (New York, 1920), pp. 128-9.

⁹⁵ Cartoonist of the Commune.

⁹⁶ A Jacobin member of the Commune.

⁹⁷ Vallès to unnamed Communard, in Arkell, 'When the Commune came to Fitzrovia,' p. 13.

⁹⁸ Eduard Bernstein, *My years of exile: reminiscences of a socialist* (London, 1921), p. 225.

⁹⁹ T. F. Evans, 'Introduction', in T. F. Evans (ed.), *Shaw: the critical heritage* (London, 1976), pp. 1-39, p. 18.

¹⁰⁰ Susan Bernstein, 'Radical Readers at the British Museum: Eleanor Marx, Clementina Black, Amy Levy,' *Nineteenth Century Gender Studies*, 3 (2007).

¹⁰¹ George Gissing, *New Grub Street* (London, 1891).

¹⁰² Susan Bernstein, *Roomscape: Women Writers in the British Museum from George Eliot to Virginia Woolf* (Edinburgh, 2013).

¹⁰³ Eleanor Marx remembered going outside to smoke while discussing theatre, politics and religion with other 'young bohemians'. See, Mary Gabriel, *Love and capital: Karl and Jenny Marx and the birth of a revolution* (Boston, MA, 2011), p. 390.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Bernstein, *Roomscape*, p. 63.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, 'Political Refugees', pp. 404-5.

¹⁰⁶ Something like what Matthew Beaumont has termed 'the secret life of the streets'. See, Matthew Beaumont, *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London* (London, 2016), p. 10.